UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/49/71
24 August 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-ninth session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda items 10 and 107

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.68

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of draft resolution A/49/L.68, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to establish an Open-ended High-level Working Group of the General Assembly, under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly and with two vice-chairmen to be elected by the Working Group, and that the Group might establish, as necessary, subgroups open to the participation of all Member States;

(b) Decide also that the Working Group would undertake a thorough review of the studies and reports of the relevant United Nations bodies and submissions of Member States and observers, as well as studies and reports of independent commissions, non-governmental organizations, institutions, scholars and other experts, on subjects relating to the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, to be selected by the Working Group with the assistance of the Secretariat, and, without in any way duplicating or impeding the work of the other working groups referred to above, [the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Development, the High-level Open-ended Working

Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace and the Consultations on Prospective New Modalities for Financing Operational Activities for Development], specify by consensus those ideas and proposals drawn therefrom that it concludes are appropriate for the purpose of revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system in fulfilment of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) Request the Bureau of the Working Group to maintain regular contacts with the bureaux of the working groups mentioned above;

(d) Also request the Working Group to commence its substantive work during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly and submit a report on its work before the end of that session;

(e) Further request the Secretary-General to provide, within existing resources, to be supplemented by a trust fund to which voluntary contributions could be solicited, full assistance to the Working Group, including the facilities and support services necessary for it to conduct its work;

(f) Decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fiftieth session an item entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

B. Relationship of the requests to the programme of work

2. The activities called for in draft resolution A/49/L.68 are related to major programme I (Maintenance of peace and security, disarmament and decolonization), programme 3 (General Assembly affairs), of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised. 1/ Related activities are reflected under the subprogramme entitled "General Assembly affairs" of section 3B (Department of Political Affairs I), of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. 2/

C. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

3. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the activities required for the implementation of the requests would be as follows:

(a) The Working Group would be requested to commence its substantive work during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Prior to its meeting at the fiftieth session, however, it would meet during the forty-ninth session to discuss organizational matters;

(b) While the Working Group would still need to determine the frequency of its meetings, for the purpose of estimating the cost of implementing the draft resolution, it is assumed that the Working Group would hold a limited number of meetings in New York during the period September to December 1995. From 1 January through September 1996, it is assumed that it would hold one or

two meetings per week, for a maximum total of 78 meetings. A report would be submitted to the General Assembly in September 1996. The pattern of meetings for 1995 and 1996 would consist of one meeting in the morning and one meeting in the afternoon, with interpretation and documentation in the six official languages of the United Nations. For meetings in 1995, it is assumed that there would be 25 pages of pre-session and 150 pages of in-session documentation in the six official languages. For the period January through September 1996, it is anticipated that there would be 50 pages of pre-session, 500 pages of in-session and 32 pages of post-session documentation in the six official languages;

(c) It is assumed that the participants of the Working Group would be representatives of their Governments and that the United Nations would not defray travel and subsistence costs;

(d) It is also assumed that press, radio and television coverage would not be required for meetings of the Working Group;

(e) The Secretary-General would provide substantive and technical servicing of the Working Group and prepare, between meetings, such further documentation as required by the Working Group. Experience with other working groups of the General Assembly indicates that the demand for secretariat services and substantive assistance would be considerable, particularly in view of the scope of the mandate that the General Assembly is asked to confer on the Working Group. Substantive servicing would therefore require undertaking a thorough review of studies and reports of the relevant United Nations bodies and submissions of Member States and observers, as well as studies and reports of independent commissions, non-governmental organizations, institutions, scholars and other experts, on subjects relating to the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, to be selected by the Working Group with the assistance of the Secretariat. These studies are numerous and voluminous, encompassing many aspects of the United Nations system's work in the political, economic and social and other fields;

(f) The Secretary-General would establish a trust fund for this activity and invite Member States to make voluntary contributions to meet those costs that cannot be absorbed from the regular budget.

D. Modifications required in the approved programme of work for 1994-1995

4. The activities called for in the draft resolution would fall under the activities enumerated in paragraph 1 (b) of the subprogramme entitled "General Assembly affairs" of section 3B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Accordingly, no modifications would be required.

E. Additional requirements at full cost

5. Implementation of the request contained in the draft resolution would require substantive, technical and conference servicing of the meetings of the

Working Group prior to and during its meetings. It is estimated, therefore, that, in addition to conference-servicing requirements, supplementary staff resources (for three work-months of one P-5, one P-4 and one General Service (Other level)) and 15 work-months of consultants' services would be required to undertake the activities mentioned in paragraph 3 (e) above and to provide support to the Working Group in 1995. With respect to 1996, it is estimated that nine work-months of the same number and level of staff would be required and 45 work-months of consultants' services.

6. The P-5 staff member would act as Secretary of the Working Group and would be responsible, in close consultation with its Chairman, for making arrangements for meetings of the working Group and its Bureau, preparing draft agendas, procedural notes and briefs for the Chairman, the draft programme of work and the schedule of meetings; coordinating the production of the necessary substantive documentation in cooperation with Secretariat units, institutions, organizations and individual experts; and assisting and advising the Chairman on matters relating to the conduct of meetings, consultations with chairmen of other working groups and the application of the rules of procedure and practice of the General Assembly. The P-4 staff member would assist the Secretary, prepare summaries of debates for use by the Chairman and the Bureau, prepare drafts on procedural issues relating to the mandate of the Working Group, compiling relevant documentation, and prepare the draft of the procedural part of the Working Group's report to the General Assembly. The General Service staff member would act as meetings assistant, typing notes, briefs and correspondence, keeping the list of speakers, preparing announcements for the Journal of the United Nations, distributing documentation and booking meeting rooms.

7. The breakdown of additional requirements are as follows:

(In United States dollars)

	1995	1996	Total
Staff costs	70 800	217 600	288 400
Consultants	125 000	375 000	500 000
Subtotal	195 800	592 600	788 400
Conference servicing	255 300	1 080 800	1 336 100
Grand total	451 100	1 673 400	2 124 500

F. Potential for absorption

8. The programme budget for 1994-1995 and the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 both include provision, not only for meetings already in the calendar of conferences, but also for meetings to be added later by decisions of the General Assembly, provided that the number and distribution of meetings is consistent with the pattern in previous years. On this basis, it is not

anticipated that additional appropriations will be required for conference services.

9. No provisions have been made in the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 3/ to cover substantive and technical secretariat servicing of the meetings called for in the draft resolution. It is currently the understanding of the Secretary-General, however, that it should be possible for the cost of consultants to assist in the substantive servicing of the meetings of the Working Group in 1995 ($125,000) to be met from the trust fund to be established for the purpose of implementing the activities called for in draft resolution A/49/L.68. At this stage, it is not anticipated that staff costs for servicing the Working Group ($70,800) can be absorbed in this way. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.68, the Secretary-General would endeavour to meet these requirements within the overall resources of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Actual expenditure in this respect would be reflected in the second performance report for 1994-1995.

10. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.68, it is currently anticipated that additional requirements in respect of conference servicing of the Working Group in 1996 will be met from resources requested under section 26E of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. At this stage, it is also anticipated that additional requirements for consultancy services in 1996 would be met from voluntary contributions to the trust fund to be established by the Secretary-General. As regards additional resources to finance additional staff to service the Working Group in 1996, revised estimates for 1996-1997 will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

G. Summary

11. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.68, it is not currently anticipated that an additional appropriation would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

12. The meetings of the Working Group during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly would require a specific exception to paragraph 7 of Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, in which the Assembly decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly might meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the General Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1 and corrigendum) (vol. I).

2/ Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/48/6/Rev.1) (vol. I).

3/ Ibid., Supplement No. 6A (A/48/6/Rev.1/Add.1).